



Car Clicks or Does Nothing When You Turn the Key — What It Is, and What It Costs

How real visits for a no-crank no-start ended at independent shops across the US — the part actually replaced, how often, and what it cost when it was the only fix.

Starter or car battery

Nearly half of all these visits end in one of these two

Starter **\$267 – \$494**

Car battery **\$140 – \$314**

typical cost when it was the only fix
(parts + labor)

THE FIX INVOLVED	SHARE OF THESE VISITS*	TYPICAL COST†	MEDIAN
Starter	43.6%	\$267 – \$494	\$370
Car battery	40.0%	\$140 – \$314	\$206
Alternator	6.5%	\$302 – \$563	\$414
Switch	3.3%	\$126 – \$344	\$216
Fuse	3.0%	\$56 – \$239	\$115
Cables / wiring	2.9%	\$121 – \$392	\$225
Fuel pump	2.1%	\$380 – \$829	\$600
Fuel filter	2.0%	\$134 – \$436	\$256
Other, rarer causes	smaller shares — ignition switches, neutral-safety switches, fusible links, wiring	varies	—

*Share of visits whose repair involved this part; combined repairs count toward each part, so shares overlap and don't add to 100%.

†Middle half of real invoices when this was the only fix — parts + labor, all vehicle types.

WHICH ONE IS YOURS? LISTEN FIRST

- **One solid click, then nothing** — A single firm click with healthy lights is the starter's signature — the solenoid engages but the motor doesn't turn.
- **Rapid clicking or everything dim** — Machine-gun clicking, dim lights, or a dash that resets when you turn the key is a battery too weak to spin the engine — or corroded terminals acting like one.
- **Key does absolutely nothing** — No click and no dash reaction points upstream of the starter — an ignition switch, a blown fusible link, a failed relay, or a neutral-safety switch.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHOP

Expect a starting-system test before a part is sold: battery voltage, terminal condition, then starter draw. One click with good lights is a starter; rapid clicking or dim lights a battery or its cables. A starter on some engines hides under the intake — that access, not the part, is the price spread.

ABOUT THIS DATA · HOW TO USE THIS BRIEF

Vehicles **all makes and models, US fleet**

Data confidence **High** — *large sample, stable shares*

Records through **July 2026**, refreshed continuously

Source **paid invoices from independent US repair shops**

Take it to the shop. It tells you what the likely answers are and what each one should cost — so when the diagnosis comes back, you already know whether the number fits. Vehicle-specific price reports for the common fixes are on fixdozer.com.